



What to Expect in Embassy Baghdad

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Clothing

It is important for employees to be aware of local customs when planning wardrobe choices. Modest dress is critical for employees working with the Iraqi public. During the winter months, local government officials and other contacts generally wear business attire. Inside the Embassy, especially for administrative jobs, business casual clothing is acceptable. It is recommended that some professional clothing for meetings and receptions be packed. There are exercise and swimming facilities available. Bring towels, but bed linen is issued. Jackets and sweaters are a must for the cooler months. Sunglasses are strongly recommended. Clothing and shoes become dirty and worn very quickly from the fine dust, gravel, dirty air, and, sometimes, mud.

Food

A food service contractor provides food service for all employees, including adequate supplies of fresh fruits, vegetables, ice and safe drinking water.

Health and Medical

High-level care, emergency and medical evacuation (medivac) is provided by the Combat Support Hospital located in the International Zone. The State Department Embassy Health Unit provides Primary Care-level services, and a military sick-call facility is located in the south end of the Palace. Limited pharmacy support is available, but should not be counted on for replenishment of long-term medications.

Housing

Nearly all 3161 employees are housed in modular units on the heavily guarded and fortified Embassy Annex compound. Post will make every effort to ensure that each permanently assigned employee on a one-year tour of duty is the sole occupant of one room, sharing a

bath with the occupant of the other room in the modular unit. Those who are posted to the Embassy for shorter durations or who are not USG employees should expect to either share a room or live in temporary, less private, group accommodations.

Each modular unit consists of two separate rooms with a shared bathroom/shower. Rooms typically contain at least one single bed, a small closet, an air conditioning/heating unit, a small refrigerator, and a television. Electrical power is 220v/50Hz with multi-plug outlets. The two-pronged European outlet is most common, and adapters and transformers are usually available at the local Post Exchange located near the compound. The internal measurement of each living unit (minus the bathroom) varies, but the average is 80 square feet per room.

Internet and Intranet

Internet service is now available in all trailers within the Embassy Annex grounds. The Department's Open Net Plus allows Internet and State Department Intranet access on desktops. Personal laptops may not/not be networked to any Embassy network.

Money

Credit cards and travelers checks are not yet a means of transacting business in Iraq. Shop owners only accept cash, including the wide use of U.S. dollars.

ATMs are available in Kuwait City, but they are NOT available in Iraq at the present time. It is recommended that employees bring cash as well as their checkbook to Iraq, where checks can be cashed at the military finance station or Embassy cashier. Credit cards and checks are accepted in the PX.

Morale and Welfare

Employees have access to a movie theater, a DVD library, a fully equipped gym, and a pool. Special activities are frequently scheduled. Religious services are regularly scheduled in the Annex Chapel found in the north end of the Palace.

Personal Mail (incoming and outgoing)

The mission in Baghdad is currently serviced by an Army Post Office (APO) facility located at the Embassy Annex and another at Camp Victory, near the Baghdad Airport. Packages and mail can be received and sent through the APO at normal US postal rates.

Mail sent to APO addresses from the United States use regular U.S. postage rates. Customs forms are required for packages. U.S. mail delivery normally takes about 10 days, but may vary based on the security situation. Maximum weight for parcels is 70 pounds. Maximum size (length and girth combined) is 108 inches. US Post Offices have rules governing mail to APO addresses.

Mailing Address:

Your Name

Your Unit (for example: ISPO Senior Electricity Consultant)

U.S. Embassy Baghdad

APO AE 09316

Phone

Cellular telephone communications is currently provided by a U.S. carrier. Individuals should bring a calling card to make personal calls (i.e., using 800 access).

Support Facilities

The following services are provided by the logistics support contractor: expendable supplies; motor pool; free laundry service (both drop-off and self-service) and dry cleaning; barber shop; beauty shop; full-service cafeteria; small theatre; gym; swimming pool; shuttle bus, facilities maintenance, morale and welfare; and other services. Residents are charged a nominal fee per service for barber/beauty services.

A small Army and Air Force Post Exchange (PX) within the International Zone usually has a good stock of basic toiletries along with snack and quick food, beverages, basic clothing items, photo supplies, and T-shirts. Step-down transformers, dual voltage appliances, and outlet adapters are usually available. Those who have strong preferences in particular brands of toiletries or cosmetics are encouraged to bring their own supply of products, given the limited choices at the PX.

Television and Radio

American Forces Network (AFN) TV is provided via satellite terminal installations in some offices as well as housing areas, the logistic support contractor compound, and some U.S. military encampments. Satellite cable TV is currently being installed in all Embassy housing units.

Transportation

Employees are not authorized to ship or own privately owned vehicles (POV). Official and personal travel outside the International Zone will be in accordance with post policy in Full-Armored Vehicles (FAV) with personal security details (PSDs). Frequency of travel may be limited due to security threats, the availability of vehicles, personal security details, and drivers. Official travel has priority over personal requirements. Use of public transportation is not allowed.

Travel/Transportation to Post

The logistics support contractor transports employees to the military side of the Amman airport. Meal tickets will be provided. The logistics support contractor will issue a helmet and protective vest. There is usually a long wait and departure schedules are not published due to security concerns. Luggage is palletized. Employees must carry their helmet and vest on the plane and wear them during the trip into Baghdad. Only one briefcase or small backpack can be hand-carried onto the C-130 aircraft in addition to protective gear.

Weather

Employees should plan for hot summers and moderately to definitely cool and rainy winters. Summer evenings can be chilly. The Embassy Annex is air-conditioned and remains cool throughout the summer. Unfortunately, the heat during the winter months can be problematic. Fine dirt and dust is the norm, circulated by regular dust storms.